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A monitoring tool for the provision of accessible and attractive urban green spaces

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Abstract

The availability of accessible and attractive green spaces is an integral part of urban quality of life. This paper presents an integrated indicator designed for: (1) the monitoring of the urban green space provision against quantitative and qualitative targets; (2) the comparison between cities and city parts; (3) the assessment of the effects of future policy scenarios; (4) the indication of locations where action is required. The indicator development was guided by five principles: ‘citizen based’, ‘functional levels’, ‘preconditions for use’, ‘variety of qualities’, and ‘multiple use’. The parameters were derived from the available research on public preferences and use of green spaces. The indicator is made operational in a GIS-based working procedure starting from the residential places and based on a two-step approach: (1) The accessibility: which green spaces are within reach at different functional levels? (2) The attractiveness: which are the accessible green spaces’ qualities? The

GIS-model was applied in four cities of Flanders (northern part of Belgium): Antwerp, Ghent, Aalst and Kortrijk. This article explains the underlying ideas and the construction of the monitoring tool and discusses the suitability as a touchstone for current and future policy as well as its possible guiding role in local planning situations.



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Keywords

Green spaces; Accessibility; Urban indicators; GIS; Flanders

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Ann Van Herzele has an academic background in forestry and environmental impact assessment. She has an extensive practical and research experience in the field of environmental policy and spatial planning, as well as in urban greening and forestry. She currently holds a position as senior researcher at the Human Ecology Department of the Free University of Brussels. Her research deals with participation and communication in urban forestry and urban greening.

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has constructed Geographical Information Systems (GIS) in a wide range of fields, such as archaeology, history, soil science, forestry, environment policy and spatial planning. At present he works as researcher at the department of Modern History at Ghent University, where he focuses on the integration of time and space in GIS.

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